

Christian Liberty 4
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And Persecution
CONDEMNED.

By the
Doctrine and Authority of Pro-
phets, Christ, and his Apostles.
Manifested by plain Scripture
Testimonies.

*In a Letter to the Magistrates and Ministers of the
City of Dantzick.*

By G. Fox:

Printed in the Year, 1675.

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*For the Magistrates and Ministers
of the City of Dantzick*

AN Account being brought to us here in *England*, of the Cruel Sufferings that some of our Friends in the City of *Dantzick* have undergone, by you the Magistrates thereof; and particularly two of our Friends you keep in Close-Prison for the Truths sake, to whom you will not admit of any to speak: No not their own Wives, without a Certificate from the Chief Magistrate, (and that's but seldom,) And moreover you Magistrates, (tis said) do very much threaten our Friends there to be more Severely dealt with by you then ever hitherto, although you are pleased to give liberty to Minists, Papists, Calvinists, Lutherans and other Sects amongst you. Now we not hearing of any evil thing these People and Friends of ours, called *Quakers* has done, or any Law of God or just Law of Man, that they have Transgressed amongst you.

For were they Drunkards, Swearers, Fornicators, or Thieves, or Murderers or Perjur'd-Persons, Man-slayers, or the like; against such Actions and Actors, the Law is good in its place, and it was made for such.

But of all your Banishings, Imprisonings, Persecutings of them, we can hear of none these Crimes charged

charged against them: *But only of Matters concerning their God,* and upon a Religious account. And was not this the Case of *Daniel*? as you may see in *Dan.* the 6th. Chap. and the 5th. ver. And the saying of his Persecutors, who said. *We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the Law of his God.*

Now do you find any thing against those Poor People in the City, (called *Quakers*) that you take occasion against them: *But concerning the Law of their God, in obeying and serving of him with their whole Hearts and Souls as they ought to do, and as the Apostle exhorts unto, to Glorify God with their Souls, Bodies and Spirits, which are the Lords.*

Now as we understand, that you Magistrates go under that Noble and Great Name of Christian Magistrates, and it's the highest Title to be called after the Heavenly mans Name; *Whose Name is above every Name,* and that you profess him to be your Lord and Master, who gives you no command that you should Prison and Persecute; *Such as he has dyed for, and bought with his Blood.* Nay your Enemies you should not Persecute, for your Lord and Master commands you, *To love Enemies:* Nay he commands you if they were *Tares* to let them grow till the Harvest, and not to pluck them up, For he will send his Angels to do that; so that it is the work of his Angels; and he stopt them that would have been plucking up the Tares, *Least they should pluck up the Wheat also,* as you may see in *Matt 13. 25, 30.* and *Mat. 23.* and 31. Whereas you may see Christs own words concerning the Tares to his Servants, who said: *Will you that we go and gather up the Tares, and he said, nay, least while you gather up the Tares you root up also the Wheat with*

with them, but let both grow until the Harvest. The Harvest is the end of the World, and the Reapers are the Angels.

Now consider and see, you have no allowance here to Persecute, no not to meddle here with the Tares: Although they were a false Religion. And read likewise *Mat. 18.* Concerning the Merciless Servant, that the Lord had forgiven his Debt unto: *Who took his Fellow Servant by the Throate, and cast him into Prison, till he Payed the Debt:* This grieved the Fellow Servants, to see the Cruelty of their Fellow Servant; *Whom the Lord had forgiven his Debt,* and yet he would not forgive his Fellow Servants Debt.

Now hear the Judgment of the Lord that had forgiven the Debt of this wicked and Cruel Servant, that would not forgive his Fellow-Servants Debt. *Oh! thou wicked Servant (says the Lord) I forgave thee all thy Debt because thou desiredst me; shouldst not thou also have had Compassion on thy Fellow-Servant, even as I had on thee.*

So the Lord was Wroth with him, and Delivered him up to the Tormentors &c. So Likewise saith Christ, will my heavenly Father do also unto you, if you from your hearts forgive not every man his Brother their Trespasse.

And therefore consider and take this to Heart, *I was in Prison and you visited me not, saith Christ, and Thirsty, and Hungry, and a Stranger, &c,*

So if they went into everlasting Punishment, that did not visit Christ in his Members in Prison, what will become of you in the day of Judgment? which Casts into Prison for his Truths sake; although they be your Fellow-Servants, all professing one Lord and Master, Jesus Christ who has bought you with his

his Blood; and offered up himself for you. *Christ Commands ye should Love one another; yet, and Love Enemies, else you do not exceed the Pharisees.*

Now these are the Commands of Christ, and they that do obey his Commands, *Do love one another: (A Mark of the true Disciples of Christ) And Loves Enemies also.*

And in *Mat. 24. 48, 49.* There you may see the Good Servant of Christ; and the Evil Servant was he that smites his Follow-Servant, and Eat and Drank with Drunkards, &c.

But the Lord said, he would come upon such Servants ere they were aware, and cut them assunder, and appoint them a Portion with Hypocrites, where should be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth.

Now I desire that you may consider these Sayings of the Lord and Master, for don't you profess your selves Servants of Christ, and are not you them that have taken your Fellow Servants by the Throat, and cast them into Prison? And are not you of them that smite your Fellow Servants? And are not you of them that would be Plucking up the Tares? as you judge or conceive; but are not you forbidden by your Lord and Master, if you own him so?

And doth not he tell you, the Portion of such Servants that are found in such works aforementioned, and see if you be found in such works? then I pray consider their end.

Now do you fear the subversion of your Church by those few Servants of the Lord, that you cast into Prison, and Threaten? If your Church be the true Church of Christ, which He is the Head of, Christ hath promised and said, *(which Church is the Pillar and*

and Ground of Truth) the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it, Mat. 16. 18.

And Christ saith, let the Tares alone till the Harvest, and the Apostle saith, What is not of Faith, is Sin, for Christ is the Author of that Faith, and finisher thereof; and every Man should stand or fall to his own Master. And doth not the Apostle say? We have not Power over your Faith: And why cannot you let them stand or fall to their own Master, but Prison, and Persecute, and Banish them; would you be Masters over their Faith? Would you lead them into those things which they have not Faith in? and so into sin.

Doth not the Magistrates and Priests of Dantzick want a Gamaliel amongst them; for when they raised up Persecution against the Apostles, as you may see in the Acts, Then stood up a Councillor, named Gamaliel, a Doctor of the Law, and a Man had in Reputation among all the People, and he commanded to put the Apostles forth for a space, and made a speech amongst them.

Now I say unto you (saith he) refrain from these Men, and let them alone; for if this Councell or Work be of Men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it, least happily you be found to fight against God, and to him they all agreed.

Yea, the High-Priests and all were subject to this Councell, for the Priests had still a hand with the Magistrates in Persecution, and I fear they have a hand too much in your City, in the Persecution of those poor People called Quakers.

Now this Gamaliel may shame you; for he was no Christian; but you profess your selves Christians; for People ought to have Liberty in Christ Jesus, and in the Gospel, the Power of God.

And now, had you not better all to agree, and the

Priests also, as they did then, to Gamaliel's Councell, and let them alone, *If the Work be of Men it will come to nought; but if of God, it will stand; least you be found fighters against God also.*

And doth not Christ say to *Saul*, when he was going with his Packet of Letters in Commission from the Chief Priests to persecute the Saints, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* So he was Persecuting Christ in his Members, and he said unto him, *it was hard for him to kick against the Pricks.*

And now consider, are not you prickt in your Consciences? for Persecuting those Members of Christ; and don't you kick against that which Pricks you? the Spirit of God in your hearts, which if you obeyed it, *the fruits of it would be Love, &c.*

Where is the fruit of Love in you? (if they were Enemies) to overcome them with it? Where is your Patience, and forbearance? Where is your Long-suffering and Gentleness? and Meekness, Learning of Christ? To separate Husband from Wife, and one Christian to cast another in Prison: Oh tell not thus amongst the Jews, Turks, and Heathens; for it is a Dishonour to Christianity?

And Christ saith in *Luke 9. 55, 56.* when *James* and *John*, which were Disciples of Christ said, *Lord wilt thou Command that Fire come down from Heaven and Consume them, that would not receive him;* even as *Elias* did, *2 Kings 10.* But Christ he rebuked them, and said, *you know not what manner of Spirit you are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy Mens lives, but to save them.*

Now do you know what manner of Spirit you are of? that do Imprison, Banish, and Persecute. For these Disciples would have had it done by Prayer
and

and Persecution Condemned.

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and command of Christ, but you Persecute by your own Wills and Orders; and so cast in Prison from their Relations, Wives and Children, and Banish them; is not this to destroy mens Lives. And not in the mind of Christ to save them, though contrary minded: You see how Christ Rebuked his Disciples, who would have had them Consumed that would not receive him. Now set the Case that these would not receive your Worship, and your way: Will you therefore destroy them by Prisoning and Banishing of them? *And is not this smiting your Fellow servants:* Take heed lest the Lord come suddenly upon you.

And does not Solomon the Wise King say; *He that hath not rule over his own Spirit, is like a City that is broken down and without Walls,* Prov. 25.28.

So I desire that you had rule over your own Spirits, then would you not Persecute and Banish, and Imprison the Members of Christ, and your Fellow Servants.

But you may say, they will not bow nor conform to your Worship, and therefore you are Angry and Wrath against them, so was Nebuchadnezzar against the Children, as you may see in *Dan. 3.* But you should shew forth a Christian Spirit; for never did Christ, or the Apostles give any Command that any should be Imprisoned, or Banished, or Persecuted; but on the contrary forbad such, and told his Disciples how they should suffer, and should be Persecuted.

Mark, Godly in Christ Jesus, then Judge your selves, who is it that makes to suffer and Persecute; they are not in Christ Jesus, nor Godly.

And he that is born of the Flesh, will Persecute him that is born of the Spirit.

And therefore consider what Birth you are of, for it is not what men Profess; but what Birth they

Christian Liberty Commended,

are of, born from Above, or born from Below: For you read in the Scriptures, *That it was the Beast and the Whore, that compelled all to Worship both Small and Great*: And it was the Jews that were the Persecutors of Christ, and the Apostles, and the Heathen; so never did true Christians Persecute one another, neither have ye Example nor Command, from Jesus for so doing.

Now if you cast them out of your Church, (so called) its strange you won't let them have liberty to Meet in their own Houses; for God let *Adam* have liberty in the Earth, though he had not in Paradise, as you may see in *Gen.*

And *Abraham* let *Ishmael* and *Hagar* have liberty in the Wilderness, and gave them Bread, and their Bottle of Water, as you may see in *Gen. 21.*

Which we question whether you have been so kind to those you Imprison in your City,

And had not *Abraham* liberty to serve God in *Abimelechs* Country, as you may see in *Gen.*

And likewise, had not *Isaac* Liberty to serve God in his Country also?

Now it's strange that these Poor Servants of God and Christ, shall not have liberty under your Power and Jurisdiction in their own Native Country.

But it may be you may say they won't put off their Hats to us: And say *you* and *Thee* to us, and won't bow to you.

So you may make *Mordecai* a great offender, as *Haman* and the Kings Servants did. For the King had Commanded his Servants to Reverence *Haman*: But *Mordecai* bowed not, nor did him Reverence, so the Kings Servants, which were in the Kings Gate, where *Mordecai* sate, asked him why he transgressed the Kings

Kings Commandment. Now they spake daily unto Mordecai, and they told Hamon, and the King when he barked not unto them. So here were the Informers.

And when Hamon saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him Reverence, he was full of wrath, and he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; but he sought to destroy all the Jews, &c.

And therefore Hamon turned Informer to King Abasswerus, and said, That there was a certain People dispersed in all his Provinces, and their Laws were divers from all the Kings People, and they did not Keep the Kings Laws, &c.

And now here you may plainly see that these People had their Liberty, though their Laws were divers from the people of the Country they lived in, and though they had not kept the Kings Laws in matter of their Worship: And Mordecai had disobeyed the Kings command in not Bowing to Hamon, yet these people had their Liberty still: Till the Kings Servants and Hamon informed the King against them. But Mark Hamons end, for this was matter of Conscience towards God, that Mordecai did not bow to him; and so it was a matter of Conscience, that the three Children of Israel did not bow unto their Image; and it was a matter of Conscience that Daniel disobeyed the Decree of the King Darius, in Praying as he used to do.

And now consider if the Hat be an offence to you, and their not bowing, and Reverencing you. Christ tells you how can you believe that seek Honour one of another, and seek not the Honour that cometh from God only, John 5. 44.

And when the three Children were cast into the Fiery-Furnace by Nebuchadnezars command, for not

Wor-

Worshipping the Image he had set up: He himself was not offended for their not Reverencing or Bowing down, or putting off their Hats to his Person, but because they would not bow to his Image, which was contrary to the Law of God, *And it's said they were cast into the Fiery-Furnace, with their Coats, and Hose, and Hats on them.*

Now this *Nebuchadnezzer* was a Heathen, and yet was not offended at their keeping on their Hats, who knew not the *Kingdom of the most High Ruling in Men*, and I wish that you did, that God might have his due, and *Cesar* his due.

For if the Kingdom of the most High Rules in men, and Christ dwells in the hearts of his by faith, he who is the head of the Church, is to order men concerning Faith, Worship and Religion, by his Power, and by his Spirit, for if you will be the Husbandmen, to order men concerning Faith, Religion and Worship, as the Jews were, and did beat, Stone and Kill the Lords Messengers, that came to look for Fruits, and at last slew the Heir: I pray you read that Parable wherein the Jews Judged themselves, which is very suitable for Christians in these Ages, since the Apostles days. How has the Lords servants been Beat, Stoned, Imprisoned, and put to Death, that Christ hath sent amongst them to look for fruits.

But where did any in all their Courts, either *Jews* or *Gentiles*, Command any to put off their Hats when they came before them, or *Turks*? Nay, do not the *Turks* Laugh at the Christians, and say they spend a great deal of their time in shewing their bare heads to one another: Christians should be of a more Noble Spirit who Bear so Noble a name, and especially to them that keep on their Hats on a Religious account.

For

For the honour and esteem to Magistrates, does not lie in Hats, but in their Obedience to all the just Laws which are according to Gods Law, and Christs command, for Christ and the Apostles Commanded no such thing, that his Embassadors and Messengers that he sent forth unto all Nations should put off their Hats to the Magistrates, or to the Jewish Priests, or Heathens where they came.

But he reproveth the Pharisees for their Ambition, as you may see in *Mat. 23.* *Again I send unto you Prophets, saith Christ, and Wise men, and Scribes, and some of them you shall Kill, and Crucify; and some of them you shall Scourge in your Synagogues, and Persecute from City to City, that upon you may come all the Righteous Blood shed upon the Earth from the Blood of Righteous Abel, &c.*

Now you may consider, these were great Professors that had their Synagogues, and had their Priests, that Christ said he would send his Lambs amongst, and with their Actions should be against them. But his command was to his; *That they should pray for them, that did persecute them, and Dispitefully use them, &c.*

And therefore take heed and Repent, lest you be the succeders of this Bloody Generation: *For does not Christ say it was better a Millstone was hanged about their Necks and cast into the Sea, then that they should offend one of the least of these little ones that believed in him.*

And did not the Heathen Romans shew more kindness to the Apostle Paul, then the Professing Jews, *Who let him hire a House, and dwell two whole years in his own hired House, and received all that came unto him, Preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things*

things which concerned the Lord Jesus Christ, and no one forbade him, Acts 30. 31.

Now doth not the practice of the Heathen here condemn you (called Christians) who Cast in Prison and Banish, and won't suffer the Wives to come to their Husbands in Prison, without a Ticket from the Magistrate: will not the Heathen Romans here rise up in Judgement against you; therefore consider in the Gentle wisdom, and the true Understanding, and be not of that Ignoble Birth that doth Persecute, seeing you are commanded to the contrary, both by Christ and His Apostles: It's strange that People may not meet together to Worship God, and to Pray to God, and to Praise God; when Christ encourageth, *Where two or three are gathered together in his Name he will be in the midst them*, to encourage them, for he knew the gathering together of the Persecuting Jews and Gentiles, which had gatherings enough, but not in Christs Name: And you never Read of any that were gathered in his Name that did Persecute any, for the Apostles said, *Their Weapons were Spiritual, and they were made Able Ministers of the Spirit.*

So if the Ministers of your City and Country, were Ministers of the Spirit, and their Weapons were Spiritual, they would be ashamed that any should be Banisht or cast into Goal upon the account of Religion.

But they with the Spirit would convince them, and stop the Mouths of Gain-sayers if they were such, but there hath been an Apostacy since the days of the Apostles, from that life; power, and Spirit the Apostles were in: *And from that Grace and Faith, and Truth that comes by Jesus Christ, and which he is the Author of.* And

And an Apostacy from that holy Conversation, and pure walking as the Apostles and Church lived and walked in, in their days, and now People are turning again towards the Lord, and coming to serve him in the new life : *And fear God. and worship him, and give glory unto him*, the Nations begin to be angry.

For when Christ was Born, there was an uproar in Jerusalem : yea, it troubled Herod and the Jews, Scribes, Pharisees, and High-Priests, so the everlasting Gospel that Christ sent forth his Disciples to Preach in all Nations : *For he had tasted death for every man, and was an offering for the sins of the whole World, and he enlightens every man that comes into the World; and the Grace of God which brings Salvation, hath appeared unto all men.*

So the Apostles Preaching the Gospel in all Nations, them that were of other Religions and Worship, were offended at them.

So now as I said before, there hath been an Apostacy since the Apostles dayes, from the Light, Faith, Spirit and Power, and Grace of God, and Christ that the Apostles and true Church was in.

And now the everlasting Gospel is Preacht again, that people should believe in the Light, and come to walk in the Spirit; they have Grieved and Vexed, and Quenched : *And come to the Grace that they have turned into Wantonness*, and walk't Despitely against the Spirit of Grace; which Grace would teach them, and bring their Salvation, and come to Worship the Everlasting God in the Spirit, and in the Truth as Christ Commanded and Taught, above Sixteen Hundred Years since.

And now many stop their Eares, and close their Eyes, like the Professing Jews then; *Whose Hearts are Gross, and Ears Dull of Hearing*, And such now Persecute and Imprison them that be in the life of Christ Jesus: So as the Jews did Persecute Christ in the flesh, the Christians so called, Persecute him in his light, life, and Spirit, in his Members.

Oh therefore be awakened, a Great and mighty day of the Lord is coming, and it will find out all that do wickedly, and therefore Repent and turn to him, and while it is day hear his Voice; Harden not your hearts against God and Christ, and his People, least you be like *Pharaoh*; who Hardned his heart against Gods People, at their coming out of outward *Egypt*: Which it's feared too many doe now against Gods People who are coming out of Spiritual, *Egypt* and *Sodom*, who would keep them there in *Egypt's* life of Darkness, and *Sodom's* life of Uncleanness, pleading for Sin and Imperfection as long as they live.

But mark the end of *Pharaoh* and his *Egyptians*, and what will become think you of the Spiritual *Egyptians*, and *Sodomites*: *Where our Lord and Saviour is Crucified*, though he was *Crucified also without the Gates of Jerusalem*; and see whether all your Priests can interpret this, and read your selves.

But if you say that these People Called Quakers, say *Thee* and *Thou* to you, and won't respect Persons.

Do not you know that it is the proper Language, and the Language of all the Holy men of God, and according to all your Teaching Books to say, thou to a singular, and you to a Plural.

And does not *James* say, My Brethren, speaking
to

to the Church in his General Epistle: *My Brethren have not the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory with respect of persons, Jam. 2. 1.*

So let none be Persecuted for that which is matter of Faith, and a good Conscience, which Faith Christ is the Author of.

And as for your Cruel Threatnings of these Poor harmless People, which you have Imprisoned, and the rest, what you will do to them, take heed do not do so; you may see in the *Hebrews 11.* what a Cloud of Witnesses, and sufferers there were, and what Cruel things they underwent by their Persecutors, and what became of their Persecutors: And consider *Moses, who chose rather to suffer Afflictions with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season, esteeming the Reproaches of Christ to be greater Riches, than the Treasures in Egypt:* And you may see what good desires was in this meek man; *When he wisht all the Lords People were Prophets,* and the Lords People are both men and women, and this he said to stop the Informers: Who said, *There were some Prophecyng in the Camp,* and would have had them forbidden, *Would all the Lords People were Prophets.* And so say I, would all the People in *Dantzick,* and all the Country thereabout, were Prophets.

For I must tell you, *The Lord hath Powred out his Spirit upon all flesh, that his Sons and Daughters, Hand-Maids and Servants, Old men and Young men;* every one shall have something to Praise the Lord with, from the Lord.

And I must tell you that our Principle of Truth does not lead us to Rebel against Magistrates; but it leads from sin and evil, and to Mortify sin and

evil ; For by the Spirit we are Baptized, and Circumcised and lead into the Truth, and from all sin and evil, which the Magistrate is to Punish, and his Sword is to be turned against, so our Principal is an ease to Magistrate, and in which spirit of God, (the Manifestation of which is given to every one to Profit withall) and in this Spirit we do Profit in the things of God, and by which Spirit we do know the things of God, which are freely given to us of God ; which we speak freely to others.

And so my desire is, that you all might live, and walk in the same Spirit of God, that in it you may Profit in Gods things, *And bring forth 60. and 100. fold in this life-time, and that in the World to come you might have life everlasting.*

From him who is a lover of your Souls, and your eternal good, and desires you would lay away all Persecution ; and give over afflicting Gods People, and let your Prison doors open, that the Prisoners may go free, and that they may have their Liberty, to meet together to Worship and serve God in his Spirit, and Truth freely, as Christ commanded, for what is all your Religion good for ? *If you have not love, if you have the Tongues of Men and Angels ; and if you have Gifts and Prophecies, and understand Misteries, and all Knowledge, and could remove Mountains ; all this is nothing but like a sounding Brass, or Tinkling Cymball, if you have not love and Charity, for Charity is not puffed up, doth not Envy, is not easily provoked, seeks not her own, but bears all things, and hopes all things, and rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but in Truth.*

Therefore I desire you to read this Gospel-Christian-

Christian-Lession of the Apostles, and Practice it; that you may see where this Love and Charity is wanting, all their Religion and Profession is nothing, &c.

And so I desire you that are the Magistrates of Dantzick, that you will be pleased to read this in your Assembly, and that your Priests may have a Coppy, and read it amongst their Congregations: *From him who desires that Grace and Truth may be Multiplied amongst you, and the decrease of Wrath, Envy and Persecution; for Cain was the first Persecutor upon the Earth about Religion, and God had no respect to that Persecutors Sacrifice, neither hath he now; but to faithful Abels: And who are of that Faith, which Faith works by Love, by which Faith, (Which is the Gift of God) the Christians now have access to God, with their Spiritual Sacrifices.*

Swarthmore this 3.

of the 9. Month, 1675.

G. F.

Post-

Postscript.

ANd Christ saith in the 10th of Mat. and the 22. Ye shall be hated of all men for my Names sake, now we the true followers of Christ see his Words are fulfilled, and in Mat. 24. 9. Ye may see the same, and in Iſaiah, the 66th. and the 5th. Hear the word of the Lord, ye that Tremble at his Word, your Brethren that hate you, that Cast you out for my Names sake, ſaid, let the Lord be Glorified; but he ſhall appear to your Joy, and they ſhall be aſhamed: And ſo conſider, if you be not in the ſame Steps, that hate ſuch, that Tremble at Gods Word, and Caſt them out and Priſon them; take heed leaſt the Lord bring ſhame upon you, but the Lord will appear to their Joy that bear his Word, and Tremble at it.

G. F.

F I N I S.

